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# LEADERS IN ISRAEL APPARENTLY SPLIT IN ESPIONAGE CASE

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JERUSALEM, Nov. 30 — Israeli officials today appeared divided on how far to go in cooperating with the United States investigation of an American accused of spying for Israel, Government sources said.

Some senior Government officials are pushing for a full public explanation of Israel's actions. Other officials, however, want to continue to try to handle the affair quietly and without an independent, formal investigation that might threaten the existence of the national unity Government.

At the Cabinet meeting Sunday, a debate is expected among the ministers on what course Israel should take.

## U.S. Pressure Over Diplomats

Pressure on the Cabinet to reach a quick decision was increased by a United States State Department demand that two Israeli diplomats reported involved be made available for questioning by American law-enforcement officials who are investigating a United States Navy analyst, Jonathan Jay Pollard. He was arrested Nov. 21 and charged with selling secret American documents to Israel.

Israeli Government sources have said that the two diplomats, Ilan Ravid, an aide to the science attaché at the Israeli Embassy in Washington, and Yosef Yagur, the science attaché in the Israeli Consulate General in New York, were Mr. Pollard's contacts. The two were recalled by Israel last week and the Government has declined to make them available for questioning for reasons of diplomatic immunity.

A State Department spokesman, Charles Redman, complained Friday that the Israeli Government had not yet provided the "full and prompt cooperation" that the United States had requested a week ago. A spokesman for the State Department said today there would be no comment on the Pollard case.

## Peres Government Seen as Stalled

Political commentators here said that Prime Minister Shimon Peres's national unity Government appears to have become immobilized since the Pollard affair came to light.

"We are trying to find a way to cooperate quietly," a senior Israeli official said. But, he added that if the Americans wanted to make a public affair of the investigation, then it could become impossible for anyone here to help.

According to senior Israeli Government sources and political analysts, the Government can only truly cooperate, to the extent the United States is demanding, if there is a really independent internal Israeli investigation into the matter.

The problem, these sources say, is that Israel's top political leaders fear that an independent investigation will lead to a situation in which everyone will start blaming everyone else and all will be brought down by the affair.

Government sources said that at the moment this would explain the desire of Israel's top three leaders — Prime Minister Peres, Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin — not to appoint a commission for an independent inquiry.

So far, the three men have conducted all of an internal investigation on their own. The only conclusion they have issued publicly is that none of them had any prior knowledge of the Pollard affair.

"If they start an independent inquiry they won't be able to control how it ends," said Nahum Barnea, editor of the political weekly Koterit Rashit. "They are afraid that the conclusion of any investigation would be that someone has to quit and that someone may not want to quit. Or that someone may decide to go public and name names."

"Once that starts," he said, "this country will be in the middle of such an intelligence mess no one will escape it."

The Israeli leadership, Mr. Barnea added, is still working under the trauma of the "Lavon affair" of the 1950's. In 1954, 11 Egyptian Jews were arrested in Egypt and accused of placing bombs, on behalf of the Israeli secret service, in movie houses, a post office and the United States Information Service bureaus in Cairo and Alexandria, the aim being to spoil Egypt's relations with the West.

The Israeli Minister of Defense at the time, Pinhas Lavon, insisted that he had not known about the operation and he placed all responsibility for it on the Israeli intelligence community.

Various inquiries into the affair racked Israeli politics for 10 years, brought down more than one government and ruined several careers. Shimon Peres was the Director General of the Ministry of Defense at the time of the Lavon affair; while he was in no way implicated, as a result of the affair his own political career was upset for many years.

## For One Figure, Powerful Friends

"The trauma of the Lavon affair is very central to Peres," said Mr. Barnea. "If Peres has to choose between criticism by the United States and an internal mess like the Lavon affair, he will choose criticism from the United States."

Israeli newspapers have identified the senior counterterrorism official who was said to be "running" Mr. Pollard as Rafi Eitan. Mr. Eitan, who has denied any such involvement, has many powerful friends. He was a senior member of Israel's intelligence community and one of his closest political allies is Ariel Sharon, the Minister of Industry and Commerce.

Mr. Eitan is said to have begun working with Mr. Pollard in the spring of 1984, while he was the Government adviser on terrorism. Mr. Shamir was Prime Minister and Moshe Arens was the Defense Minister.

## The Factor of Awareness

While the operation in which Mr. Pollard is accused of playing a role began under Mr. Shamir's term, it is said to have continued throughout Mr. Peres's time as Prime Minister. In that period, the senior counterterrorism official said to have been "running" Mr. Pollard apparently left the bureau on terrorism and conducted the espionage operation in his capacity in another post, at the Defense Ministry's office for collection of scientific data, or Lekem, the office's Hebrew acronym. At that time, Mr. Rabin was the Minister of Defense.

At the minimum, then, Israeli Government sources say, Mr. Peres, Mr. Shamir, Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arens — not to mention some of Israel's intelligence chiefs — were all in a position to have been aware of the operation in which Mr. Pollard is now accused as a participant, and of the information it was bringing in, which was viewed as very useful.

According to a senior official intimately familiar with the workings of the Israeli Government, the least that Mr. Peres, Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arens must have known was that someone was passing on to Israel intelligence obtained in the United States regarding Arab armies and Soviet weapons systems, even if Mr. Pollard's name or his position in the Navy was never mentioned.

Not only do the domestic political implications of the Pollard affair appear to be immobilizing the Israeli Government, but so does the fact that some senior officials here say they really do not believe the man responsible for "running" Mr. Pollard did anything at all that wrong.

Mr. Pollard's reported Israeli contact is being depicted by senior Government officials as someone who went a little too far in trying to obtain information about Arab armies and Soviet weapons that turned out to be very useful to the Israeli military establishment — and no one apparently wants to punish him for that.